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South Korean Political Scene []

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Leading up to his visit to the United States in late April, President Chun has sought to avoid confrontation with his newly assertive opposition.

- Moderates in the government and the ruling party have been assigned to pursue a dialogue with the opposition.
- Chun, meanwhile, has sought to foster a statesmanlike image, focusing on such matters as talks with the North Koreans.
- Nonetheless, he is increasingly isolated behind conservative advisers. []

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The New Korea Democratic Party, associated with dissident leaders Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam, has proven a powerful magnet, attracting a wide range of opposition figures.

- The government-manipulated opposition party has merged with the NKDP. The enlarged party can claim to speak for half the voters, although the ruling party retains its parliamentary majority. []

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The parliamentary session of the National Assembly that will open next week will be a litmus test of prospects for political stability during the next few months.

- We do not expect the opposition to seek an early confrontation over its demands for direct presidential elections and other fundamental reforms.
- The government appears reluctant to compromise even on the opposition's minimum demands, however, risking an impasse that could spark a clash. []

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This memorandum was prepared by [] the Korea Branch, Office of East Asian Analysis.

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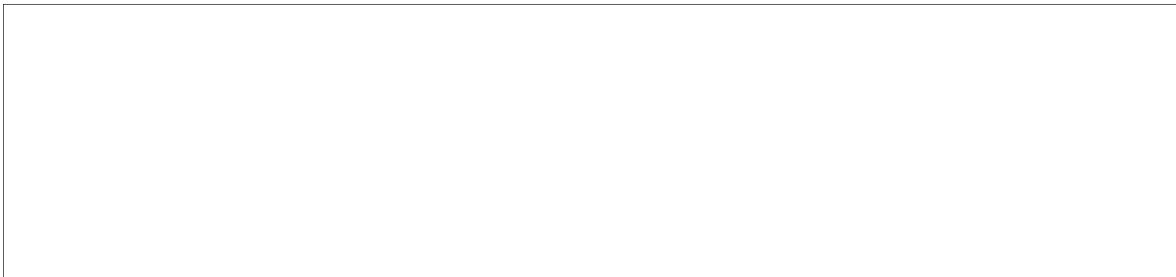
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Campus protests have been less heated this semester than last fall, but this could change in coming weeks.

- Chun's visit -- coinciding with the 25th anniversary of the Student Revolution in 1960 -- will be an occasion for protests against US support for Chun.
- The greatest potential for unrest will occur around the 18-27 May anniversary of the Army's harsh suppression of anti-Chun rioters in Kwangju in 1980. [REDACTED]

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If these protests involve major violence and, in particular, require use of the Army to control them, we would anticipate an intensification of the dissatisfaction that the military already has with Chun.



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